OHIO'S TIME

BUDGET OF THE STATE OF OHIO FY 2024-2025

Investing in People and Workforce

Recognizing the importance of Ohio's people and workforce, the DeWine-Husted Administration is focusing on families to truly demonstrate that this is Ohio's Time. Ohio's new budget eliminates taxes on essential baby items and ensures that more Ohioans have access to affordable, quality education and healthcare.

Families

Ohio families will see sales tax relief for essential items when raising their children. This budget eliminates sales taxes on diapers, creams and wipes, car seats, and strollers beginning in October, which will save our Ohioans $16 million per year.

Ohio is focused on caring for its older residents. Ohio's new operating budget takes steps to **improve quality of life for seniors** so they can remain in their homes and connected to their communities. A new pilot program will use $40 million in funding to help Ohio's senior citizens delay entry into Medicaid, preserve their personal assets, and live a healthy, independent, active lifestyle. For those seniors who need a higher level of care, the budget includes an additional $1.4 billion investment to increase the quality of care in nursing homes. This investment will increase the number of patient advocates available to residents to help ensure patient safety and encourage nursing home owners to increase pay to attract and retain top-notch staff to provide the highest quality of care.

Mental Health

Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted want Ohio to lead the nation in the availability of mental health services and support. Ohio's new operating budget provides $46.5 million to fund 988, the new three-digit number that connects callers to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, where compassionate, accessible care, and support is available to anyone experiencing mental health-related distress or for those with a loved one who may need crisis support.

Ohioans with serious mental health issues often interact with multiple support systems, including health care services, behavioral health services, human services, homeless services, and criminal justice services. This budget provides significant investments over the biennium to continue critical mental health initiatives to ensure that Ohioans are healthy and productive members of our workforce. This includes increased investment in multisystem adult collaboration to connect citizens to needed care, recovery support, stable housing, and positive community participation.

Ohio's new operating budget will also focus on solidifying Ohio as a national leader in mental health and research innovation. With a total of $30 million, the DeWine-Husted Administration will launch a new State of Ohio Action for Resiliency (SOAR) Network to strategically research complex and diverse factors related to mental health and substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery; discover innovative strategies that result in improved recovery, health, and wellness for Ohioans; and deploy those strategies in practice, programs, and policy. The SOAR Network will guide mental health best practices to grow and strengthen this important workforce in Ohio.

Ohio will increase the capacity for Ohioans to receive care in their own communities by expanding access to wellness and recovery services across systems. A total of $21.5 million funding over the biennium will be devoted to improving coordinated community treatment and providing meaningful employment support and recovery services. The expected result is a reduction in inpatient admissions and jail stays.

Ohio's operating budget includes the Social Media Parental Notification Act, which requires certain online companies to obtain verifiable parental consent to contractual terms of service before permitting kids under the age of 16 to use their platforms. In addition, companies must provide parents with their privacy guidelines to show them what will be censored or moderated content on their

child's profile. This will better protect Ohio's children online by making it easier for parents to monitor their online activities.

To ensure that support is available for the mental **wellness of Ohio's college and university students**, Ohio will direct $20 million over the biennium for the Mental Health Support Program in higher education. This program allows for the expansion of telehealth options, increased awareness of phone and text care line services, expansion of certified peer educator programs, and direct aid to higher education students who cannot afford care.

A total of $63.5 million over the biennium will be used to enhance **forensic center capacity** for court-ordered evaluations, allow for continued support for Ohio's specialty courts, and improve the ability of jails to offer addiction services, psychotropic medications, and re-entry programs. This funding also expands access to treatment within Ohio's correctional facilities for counseling, peer support, technology, and medication.

The new operating budget will help ensure that Ohioans in a behavioral health crisis receive an appropriate response and safe place to go, while also alleviating burdens on local emergency departments and jails. Approximately $40 million over the biennium will help grow Ohio's local **crisis services and infrastructure** by addressing locally identified needs and gaps in communities across the state. This funding will be distributed to local alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health boards to support and grow mobile crisis response services, behavioral health urgent care, and crisis centers.

To ensure that **quality housing options** are available for Ohioans living with and recovering from mental health and substance use disorders, Ohio is providing $64.5 million to increase the Residential State Supplement and provide grants for enhancing residential quality.

Ohioans with Disabilities

With $6.4 million, this budget ensures that technology is included as part of all service support plans for Ohioans with developmental disabilities. Making **technology-based support** available will help provide opportunities for those with developmental disabilities to experience life more fully integrated into their communities.

Programs for youth with complex behavioral health needs are supported in Ohio's new operating budget through expanded grant opportunities. More than $10

million will support initiatives such as Keeping Families Together. This program provides support to families through a multidisciplinary team of disability and trauma experts who provide recommendations and resources for families, in-home support, and respite services.

Ohio's operating budget infuses state dollars to provide **vocational rehabilitation services** to more than 8,000 additional people with disabilities. This funding will ensure that traditionally underserved groups, such as high school and college students, people with mental illness, and Ohioans with developmental disabilities receive the services they need to be productive in Ohio's workforce.

A first-of-its-kind initiative included in the new operating budget will help make Ohio's cities, counties, attractions, and venues accessible and inclusive. **Accessible Ohio** is a $1 million investment to make Ohio a global leader in public accessibility, encouraging businesses to locate in Ohio and visitors to prioritize travel to our state.

K-12 Education

Ohio's new operating budget includes $22.4 billion over the biennium to support students, schools, and districts with **increased funding in the K-12 school funding formula and school choice programs.** This record investment continues the six-year phase-in of the school funding formula implemented in 2022, which funds students where they are educated, directs state resources based on the local capacity of each school and district, and provides additional funds based on student demographics and needs.

Ohio has a strong tradition of supporting the right of families to choose where their children are educated. The budget builds on that commitment to school choice programs by **expanding eligibility for the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship** to all Ohio families. Families at or below 450% of the federal poverty level ($135,000 per year for a family of four) will be eligible to receive the full scholarship amount (approximately $6,165 for grades K-8 and $8,407 for grades 9-12) and families with higher incomes will receive a partial scholarship.

School choice also provides the option of attending one of the 334 community schools, which educate more than 116,000 Ohio students. This budget continues to support a strong community school sector by doubling the per-pupil facilities funding in this budget — from $500 to $1,000, ($87.1 million in FY 2024 and $88.6 million in FY 2025) — for brick-and-mortar community schools through the **Community School Facilities Program**. A new **Community School Equity Supplement**

provides an additional $650 per pupil for every brick-and-mortar community school in the state to enable them to better serve their students.

In addition, this budget signals the DeWine-Husted Administration's commitment to Quality Community and Independent STEM School Support with $136.5 million per year for quality community schools and independent STEM schools. Each school qualifying for this funding will receive an additional $3,000 for each economically disadvantaged student and $2,250 each for all other students. These funds will help successful community and STEM schools build the capacity to serve more Ohio students.

The new operating budget provides schools and districts with increased funding for Student Wellness and Success and requires schools and districts to use at least 50% of these funds for mental health and physical health care services. This continues our commitment to ensuring schools and districts have the resources they need to meet the needs of the whole child.

School-Based Health Centers in high-need counties will receive $7.5 million per year to continue improving student access to health care and decreasing the gap in critical services disproportionately experienced by economically disadvantaged students. Delivering essential preventive and primary care services in the school setting helps eliminate many barriers to care such as access to transportation, missed time at work, lack of providers, and time out of the classroom.

Ohio's new operating budget prioritizes literacy and places a renewed focus on ensuring that all children have the resources they need to learn to read. There is clear, scientific evidence about how children learn to read, and this budget takes a bold step by providing $64 million in funding to help schools and districts purchase curricula aligned with the science of reading. This budget also invests in schools and teachers with $55 million per year for professional development and to send 100 literacy coaches to districts with the lowest proficiency rates to support literacy instruction.

To encourage more veterans to become teachers, the new budget includes $4.8 million over the biennium to launch the Ohio Military Veteran Educators Program, which will provide more opportunities and incentives for veterans to work in Ohio schools. The program includes grants for eligible veterans to enroll in educator preparation programs, incentives for schools to hire veterans, and bonuses for eligible military veterans to work in schools.

Workforce readiness for K-12 students continues to be a priority in Ohio with an investment of $16 million per year to encourage students to earn industry-recognized credentials. The funding will also support the Innovative Workforce Incentive Program, which provides bonus payments to schools for students that earn in-demand credentials.

Access to College Credit Plus is also supported in this budget with a $3 million per year investment for high school teachers to earn credentials to teach College Credit Plus courses in high schools. Since its inception, the College Credit Plus Program has saved students in grades 7-12 and their families more than $1 billion on the cost of college tuition.

College Affordability and Access

Ohio's new operating budget ensures that more students applying to Ohio universities receive need-based financial assistance. The Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) will receive an increase in funding of $87.5 million over the biennium to provide financial assistance to Ohio residents who demonstrate the highest levels of financial need. The program will phase in increases for award amounts of up to $4,000 per student for state colleges and universities and $5,000 per student for private colleges and expand eligibility to students with an expected family contribution of $3,750 or less (an approximate family income of about $55,500 or less).

The budget will also implement the new Ohio Work Ready Grant Program with $20 million to support students attending community colleges, state university regional campuses, and Ohio technical centers. This funding will be used to provide awards of up to $3,000 to students enrolled in programs that will lead to a credential, certificate or degree that is aligned with Ohio's in-demand and critical jobs.

The new budget also increases the State Share of Instruction institutional subsidy by $46 million over the biennium to maintain quality and provide support services to Ohioans attending state institutions of higher education in Ohio.

The new Governor's Merit Scholarship will help encourage Ohio's best and brightest to stay in the state by providing $5,000 scholarships to every student in the top 5% of their high school graduating class who chooses to attend an Ohio college or university starting in FY 2025. This critical investment in Ohio's future encourages high-achieving high school graduates to remain in Ohio to pursue their post-secondary studies and contribute to Ohio's expanding economic

opportunities. It is expected that the Governor's Merit Scholarship will reduce the number of college students attending out-of-state schools by 10% to 15%.

Veteran Care

Furthering Ohio's commitment to our veterans, Ohio's new operating budget devotes a one-time $65 million allocation to match federal funding to **modernize the Ohio Veteran's Homes in Sandusky and Georgetown.** Improvements will include the conversion to single-occupancy rooms, upgraded roofing, lighting, plumbing, heating, ventilation, air conditioning systems, and infrastructure improvements.

This summary was compiled by the Ohio Office of Budget and Management. More information is available at obm.ohio.gov.